

IN THE CLAIMS:

1-20 (canceled).

21. (currently amended) A method of secured exchanges of merchandise serving both a distributed user public as well as remote and generally online sellers; comprising the steps of:

providing a distributed user public ~~that would order merchandise from remote sellers if given a chance to inspect first before accepting or refusing delivery;~~

providing a given remote seller ~~who would utilize if provided some measure of security an out-sourced network of distributed brick-and-mortar sites to afford a distributed public a relatively proximate opportunity for a walk-in inspection of ordered merchandise before accepting or refusing delivery;~~

providing an out-sourced network of distributed ~~point-of-access associates~~ participating retail mailbox stores that supply a network of distributed, physical stores in which to offer walk-in merchandise inspections of remote sellers' merchandise;

providing ~~an association resource~~ service bureau that supplies a secured-exchange program comprising the steps of:

a given user ordering merchandise from the given seller ~~in conformance with the program as by providing security against the order with the association resource;~~

the given user and seller agreeing to a given ~~point-of-access associate's~~ participating retail mailbox store for a walk-in inspection; and,

the seller causing delivery of the merchandise to the given ~~point-of-access associate's participating retail mailbox~~ store ~~in conformance with the program as by providing security against the order with the association resource;~~

whereby the given user can utilize the given point-of-access associate's participating retail mailbox store for a walk-in inspection of the merchandise before opting to accept or refuse delivery and ~~, also, said secured-exchange program affords the given point-of-access associate with opportunities to increase public traffic by offering the inspections.~~

22-24. (canceled).

25. (currently amended) The secured exchange method of claim 21 wherein the ~~association resource~~ service bureau supplies program information to the ~~point-of-access associates participating retail mailbox stores~~ including information for the given ~~point-of-access associate participating retail mailbox store~~ on particular conditions of release the inspected merchandise to the inspecting user.

26. (previously presented) The secured exchange method of claim 25 wherein the particular conditions of release include verification that the inspecting user sufficiently fulfills or secures payment or barter for the inspected merchandise.

27. (currently amended) A method of secured exchanges of merchandise facilitating transactions between a distributed user public and remote, generally online sellers; comprising the steps of:

providing a distributed user public ~~that would like a chance to inspect merchandise from remote sellers before having to accept or refuse delivery;~~

providing a given remote seller ~~who would agree to such if provided some measure of security;~~

providing an out-sourced network of distributed ~~point-of-access associates participating retail mailbox stores~~ that supply a network of distributed, physical stores in which to offer walk-in merchandise inspections of remote sellers' merchandise;

providing an ~~association resource~~ service bureau that supplies a secured-exchange program comprising the steps of:

a given user contacting the given seller to cause delivery for inspection of merchandise on a specified ~~point-of-access associate's participating retail mailbox store in conformance with the program as by providing security against the transaction with the association resource;~~ and,

the seller causing delivery of the merchandise to the specified ~~point-of-access associate's~~ participating retail mailbox store whereby the given user can utilize the opportunity for a walk-in inspection of the merchandise before opting to accept or refuse delivery;

~~—said secured-exchange program thereby affording the point-of-access associates with opportunities to increase public traffic by offering the inspections.~~

28-30. (canceled)

31. (currently amended) The secured exchange method of claim 27 wherein the ~~association resource~~ service bureau supplies program information to the ~~point-of-access associates~~ participating retail mailbox stores including information for the given ~~point-of-access associate~~ participating retail mailbox store on particular conditions of release of the inspected merchandise to the inspecting user.

32. (previously presented) The secured exchange method of claim 30 wherein the particular conditions of release include verification that the inspecting user sufficiently fulfills or secures payment or barter for the inspected merchandise.

33-40. (canceled)

IN THE ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE:

Replace the present abstract of the disclosure with the Abstract on the following page:

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### ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

-- A service of participating retail mailbox stores allows online shoppers a chance to inspect the goods of an online merchant at one such participating, local retail mailbox store before deciding ultimately whether to take possession of or decline the goods. The service implements, and polices, policies which govern the transaction. One such policy is that the local retail mailbox store makes sure that the inspecting shopper has paid for the goods if he or she accepts them and intends to take possession over them. In contrast, if the inspecting shopper declines the goods, another such policy is that the local retail mailbox store retains possession of the goods for the benefit of the online merchant. --.